

Evidentiary Document No. 5193

RESTRICTED

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"CONFIDENTIAL" to
"RESTRICTED" by order of the
Secretary of War By/s/E.
Checkot, Major Inf.

For the WAR CRIMES OFFICE

Judge Advocate General's Department - War Department
United State of America.

In the matter of gross inadequacies amounting to a group homicide of hundreds of American military personnel while transporting them from Pier 7, Manila, to Japan, December 12, 1944, to January 29, 1945.

Perpetuation of Testimony of
Harold J. Whitcomb, O-369502
1st. Lt.

Taken at: Biltmore Regional Convalescent Hospital, Miami, Florida.

Date: 4 October, 1945.

In the presence of: Meyer Sugarman, Special Agent, Security Intelligence Corps, Fourth Service Command.

Reporter: Elizabeth B. Roth, Clerk-Steno, Miami Beach Service Base, Miami Beach, Florida.

Questions by: Meyer Sugarman, Special Agent, Security Intelligence Corps, Fourth Service Command.

Q. State your name, rank, serial number and permanent home address.

A. Harold John Whitcomb, 1st. Lt., O-369502, 200 Buchanan Street, Fremont, Ohio.

Q. State your civilian background before entering the Army.

A. I was born at Fremont, Ohio, 11 September, 1912. I attended public schools at Clyde, Ohio, and was graduated from high school, I was employed as an inventory clerk with a local concern, Standard Products, before entering the Army.

Q. State the date of your capture, where you were held and date of liberation.

A. I was captured 9 April, 1942, on Bataan. I was on the death march and was held at Camp O'Donnell from 15 April, 1942, until 5 May, 1942, that was used as an assembly camp by the Japanese. I went to Cabanatuan, Camp No. 1, where I was held from 29 June, 1942, until 26 October, 1942; then I was sent to Davao Penal Colony on the island of Mindanao where I was held from 11 November, 1942, until June, 1944. I was returned to Cabanatuan where I was held from June, 1944, until October, 1944. I was then at Pilibid Prison Hospital, Manila, from October, 1944, until December, 1944. I was then at Fukioko, No. 22, Kyushu, Japan, from January, 1945, until April, 1945. I was at Hoten Prison Camp, Mukden, Manchuria, from April, 1945, until liberation on 15 August, 1945.

Q. Describe your boat trip from Manila.

A. 1687 men, all Americans who had been gathered at Bilibid Prison Hospital at Manila, boarded the Japanese transport, Irioko Maru, at Manila, Pier 7, on 12 December, 1944. We were piled into two holds and we were so crowded that we were not all able to lie down at the same time. If one sat down, another had to stand up. The Japanese sent us a teabucket of water for 700 men. There were only two buckets in three days and each bucket contained only about six gallons of water. There were no sanitation facilities, not even buckets, and we were not permitted to go on deck even for sanitation purposes. The only ones who were permitted to go on deck were those who went for food. The air was particularly foul and between December 12th and December 14th, several hundred men died of suffocation or lack of water. We kept yelling for water and air. There was a Japanese guard at the top of the ladder and he would not even listen to us. There is no accurate account of how many died because we were bombed 14th December and on the morning of the 15th, and abandoned the boat that day.

Q. What occurred in connection with the bombing?

A. We were bombed on the 14th and the boat went aground. We were bombed again on the 15th. The Japanese took off then and later we took off. Approximately 1200 of the original group were able to get ashore.

Q. What happened then?

A. We were on the Island of Luzon at Alangopo. We 1200 were kept in an enclosed tennis court. There were no latrine facilities. We were fed four times during the seven days. Each time we received only 1½ spoonfuls of uncooked rice and we had no facilities with which to cook it. We were given some clothing. We had to remain at the macadem tennis court all day and all night, stark naked. Many of us suffered from cold. During this seven-day period, 100 American

military personnel died from exposure, dysentery and starvation. The Japanese gathered their bodies once a day.

Q. Do you know the names of any Japanese personnel who were with you on the boat?

A. Yes, I do. Lt. Murata who came to the group from Cabanatuan, Philippine Islands, and a Japanese civilian interpreter named Mr. Wada were directly responsible for these conditions. Their attitude was one of good intentions to our faces and of no concern once they were away from us. While we were in this tennis court, they continually said they were trying to arrange transportation and food for us. However, at the same time, they would be seen across the road with Japanese soldiers, talking, laughing, drinking beer and smoking cigarettes; and from what I understand, did nothing to mitigate the situation.

Q. What happened then?

A. We were then taken to San Fernando, Philippine Islands, where we were kept in an old abandoned theater for three days. We were then loaded on a railroad car. One hundred of us were crowded into a box car. These cars were the small European size. The Japanese placed some of our personnel on top of the cars so the bombers wouldn't hit them. These men were given pillow cases and white flags for signaling.

Q. Where were you taken next?

A. We were taken off the train at Linguian on the Island of Luzon. We spent part of the day in the school yard where we were given no sanitation facilities. We were then marched to the beach where we remained two days and one night. We were on the sand; had no shade; almost no water and that which we did have was measured by the spoonful. Two Officers, including one colonel, and also one enlisted man died from exposure. Incidentally, we were in fear of our lives because under the sand of the beach had been buried gasoline and ammunition.

Q. Were you again loaded on a boat?

A. We were put on a horse transport. There were two holds and I was in the second one. I was grouped among horse remains, flies and corruption. Again, water was measured by the spoonful. We were supposed to have been fed two times a day but often we were only fed once a day. Our food generally consisted of three tablespoonfuls of hot water soup and the same amount of cooked rice, two times a day. Many of the men died either from accumulated weaknesses from former experiences, dysentery or malaria. The dead would average 25 a day mainly from starvation, dysentery or infection. We were so starved that we ate flies and some men even picked grain that was on the floor with the horse remains.

We were crazed with hunger. On the 2nd. or 3rd. of January, we were torpedoed twice. The rudder and propeller of the boat were damaged but there were no casualties. We were on this horse transport about thirteen days all told and on January 9th in Tacaw Harbor, Formosa, we were hit by a Navy Bomb Diver.

Q. Were any efforts made to stop this condition?

A. Lt. Col. Olsen made many efforts at the risk of his own personal safety to improve our lot. Lt. Murata and Mr. Wada would not do anything and would not listen.

Q. What happened on January 9th?

A. We were hit by several bombs along the water line and three of the bombs exploded in the forward hold where 600 to 700 men were lined up in squads waiting for breakfast. At that time, we had one G.I. cup of tea for 24 men. These three bombs killed about 500 of the 700 men quartered there and about 200 in the afterhold were wounded. We had all been in a weakened condition because we were ravaged by starvation, exposure and zero weather. The holds were uncovered and we had no blankets. Most of us had no clothing. We had absolutely no medical attention and as we neared Formosa, we had food but once a day, no water and we scraped the floor covered with horse remains for snow that filtered down through the hold. At the time we were bombed, approximately 40 men a day were dying from starvation and privation.

Q. What happened after you were bombed?

A. Those of us who survived were transferred to a small inter-island steamer and moved to Japan. The death rate was high but I am unable to estimate it. We arrived at Moji on the island of Kyushu approximately January 28th or 29th. Many of the men were beaten by guards when they attempted to scrape snow off the canvas to get needed liquids. Conditions again were poor. Approximately 225 of the original 1687 disembarked at Moji and 105 of that group were sick and wounded and were taken to a hospital. At this time Lt. Murata and Mr. Wada left the group.

Q. What happened then?

A. This hospital was a bare shed. There were no doctors and we had to lay on the floor. We did not have any medical aid for several days and we received only a small quantity of food. We were fed twice a day but that was mainly thin rice gruel. We remained here until February 20th. The death rate at this time was very high and we had about 10 to 17 dead a day and on February 20th, all that remained of the 105 were 27 men.

(Signed) Harold J. Whitcomb,
1st. Lt., AAF.

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State of)
) SS
County of)

I, Harold J. Whitcomb, of lawful age, being duly sworn on oath, state that I have read the foregoing transcription of my interrogation and all answers contained therein are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

(signed) Harold J. Whitcomb,
1st. Lt. AAF.

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 22 day of October, 1945.

(signed) not legible

Post Judge Advocate
Fletcher General Hsp.,
Cambridge, Ohio.

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Meyer Sugarman, Special Agent, Security Intelligence Corps, Fourth Service Command, certify that Harold J. Whitcomb, 02369502, 1st. Lt., personally appeared before me on 4 October, 1945, and testified concerning War Crimes; and that the foregoing is an accurate transcription of the answers given by him to the several questions set forth.

Miami Beach, Florida.
Date: 11 October, 1945.

(Signed) Meyer Sugarman
Special Agent,
Security Intelligence Corps,
Fourth Service Command.

CERTIFIED TRUE COPY

(sgd) Everett Checket
Major, Infantry.

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Ex 1628 A

中尉〇一三六九五〇二、ヘロルド・J・フイットカム
ノ証言

× × × × × × × ×

問、貴方ノ名前ト階級ト認識票番號ト本營ヲ云ツテ
下サイ

答、ヘロルド・ジョン・フイットカム、中尉〇一三
六九五〇二、オハイオ州アレモント市アキヤナ
ン街二〇〇番地

× × × × × × × ×

問、貴方が捕虜ニナツタ日時ト、何所ヲ抑留サレテ
イタカ、繰返サレタノヘ何時カラ云ツテ下サイ

答、私ハ一九四二年（昭和十七年）四月九日ベタア
ンデ捕ヘラレマシタ。私ハカノ死ノ行進ニ加ヘ
ラレ、ソシテ日本人ニヨツテ集合宿營地トシテ
用ヒラレテキタオドネル収容所ニ、一九四二年

（昭和十七年）五月十五日カラ一九四二年（昭和十
七年）五月五日迄抑留サレテキマシタ。私ハキ
ヤベナチユアンノ第一収容所ヘ行キ、ソコデ一
九四二年（昭和十七年）六月二十九日カラ一九
四二年（昭和十七年）十月二十六日迄収容サレ
テキマシタ。ソレカラ私ハシンダナオ島ノダザ

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アオ流刑地へ送られ、ソコデヘ一九四二年（昭和十七年）十一月カラ一九四四年（昭和十九年）六月迄抑留サレテキマシタ。ソレカラ私ヘキヤベナチユアソンニ戻リ、ソコデヘ一九四四年（昭和十九年）六月カラ一九四四年（昭和十九年）十月迄抑留サレマシタ。私ヘ又ニ一九四四年（昭和十九年）十月カラ同年十二月迄マニラノビリビット監獄病院ニ居リマシタ。ソレカラ日本ノ九州ノ「フキオコ」二十二監収容所ニ一九四五年（昭和二十年）一月カラ同年四月迄居リマシタ。福岡州奉天ノ奉天俘虜収容所ニハ一九四五年（昭和二十年）四月カラ同年八月十五日釋放サレル迄居リマシタ。

問、マニラカラノ貴方ノ航海ニ就テ話シテ下サイ。

答、マニラノビリビット監獄病院ニ集メラレテキタアメリカ人バカリ一六八七人ガ、一九四四年（昭和十九年）十二月十二日マニラノ七番埠頭デ日本ノ輸送船「イリオコ」丸ニ乗リマシタ。我々ヘ二ツノ船達ヘ詰込マレテ、全員ガ同時ニ濱ニナルコトガ出来ナイ程船員デシタ。モシ一人ガ坐リ込メバモウ一人ハ立タネバナリマセン。

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Dec 5/93

デシタ。五人へ我々ニ七百八人當り茶桶一杯ノ
水ヲヨコシマシタ。三日間ニタツタ二杯ガ供給
サレ、バケツ一杯ニハボンノ六ガロン位ノ水
シカ入ツテ居マセデシタ。船中ニハ何等衛生
設備トテハナク、バケツサヘモ無ク、我々ハ便
尿ノ爲ニサヘ甲板ニ上ルコトハ許サレテキマセ
ンデシタ。甲板ヘ上ツテ行クコトガ許サレテキ
タ唯一ノ船中ハ、食物ヲ取リニ行ク者違デシタ
空氣ハ常に濁ツテオリ、十二月十二日カラ十二
月十四日ノ間ニ、靈息ヤ水ノ缺乏ノタメニ數百
人ノ者が死ニマシタ。我々ハ始終水ヤ空氣ヲ求
メテ叫ビ立テテ居マシタ。梯子段ノ頂上ニハ日
本人ノ番兵ガオリ、我々ノ言葉ニ耳ヲ傾ケヤウ
トモシマセデシタ。ドノ位死者ガアツタカ
ハツキリシタ概ハ分リマセデシタ、トイフノ
ハ我々ハ十二月十四日ト十五日ノ朝爆撃ヲ受ケ
十五日該船ヲ去ツタカラデアリマス。

間、ソノ爆撃ニ耐シテドンナ事ガ起リマシタカ。
終、我々ハ十四日ニ爆撃ヲ受ケ、船ハ暗礁ニ乗上ゲ
マシタ。十五日再ビ爆撃サレマシタ。ソノ時日
本人達ガ下船シ、ソノ後我々ガ下船シマシタ。
最初乗込ンダ一行ノ中約千三百人

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日本人が上陸スルコトが出来マシタ。

問、ソレカラドウイフコトが起リマシタカ。

答、我々ヘルソン島ノアロンゴボニ上リマシタ。我々千二百人ハ幽ヒオシタ庭球場ノ内ニ留メオカレマシタ。ソコニハ便所ノ設備ガアリマセンドシタ。我々ハ七日間ノ内ニ四回食事ヲ與ヘラレマシタ。毎日タツタ匙一杯半ノ生米ヲ與ヘラレマシタ、シカモソレヲ調理スル設備ハ何モアリマセンドシタ。我々ハ若干ノ衣類ヲ與ヘラレマシタ。夜モ昼モズートソノ碎石ヲ鋪イタ庭球場ニ眞裸デ留マツテキナケレバナリマセンドシタ。我々ノ中ノ多クノ者ハ堪サデ苦シンデ居リマシタ。コノ七日間ノ内ニ、百人ノアメリカ兵士ガ野原シト赤痢ト飢餓ノタメニ死亡致シマシタ。日本人ハ彼等ノ死體ヲ日ニ一度集メテユキマシタ。

× × × × × ×

問、ソレカラドウイフ事が起リマシタカ。

答、我々ハ比島サン・フェルナンドニ連れて行カレソコデ三日間古イガラントシタ劇場ニ留メ置カレマシタ。ソレカラ我々ハ列車ニ乗セラレマシ

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タ。我々百人ノモノガ一種ニ詰メ込マレタノデ
ス。コレヲノ草箱ハ小艇ナ歐州型ノモノデシタ。
爆薬機ガソノ列車ヲ爆送シヨウトジナイ様ニ日
本人ハ我々ノ一部ヲ草箱ノテツペンニ乗セマシ
タ。
右ノ若達ハ信號用ニ枕板ト白旗ヲ與ヘラレマシ
タ。

問、貴方ハ次ニ何處ヘ達レテ行カレマシタカ。

答、我々ヘルソン島ノリングエンデ列車カラ降サレ
マシタ。我々ハ學校ノ校庭デ、ソノ日ノ一羽ヲ
過シマシタガソコデハ衛生設備ハ全然アリマセ
ンデシタ。ソレカラ我々ハ海岸迄歩カセラレソ
コデ二日一夜ヲ過シマシタ。我々ハ砂ノ上ニ居
テ日カゲハナクナリ水ハ殆ンド買ヘズ貰ツタ水
トイフノハ起テ討ツテ與ヘラレタノデス。大佐
一仁ヲ合ム將校二名及兵隊一名ガ日射病デ死ニ
マシタ。又海岸ノ砂ノ下ニ毒發油ト記載ガ垣メ
ラレテアツタノデ我々ハ自分達ノ生命ノ危険ヲ
感ジテ居タノデシタ。

問、貴方ハソノ後又船ニ乗セラレマシタカ。

答、我々ハ島ノ陸送船ニ乗セラレマシタ。ソノ船デ

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（二）ノ如キガアツテ私ハ二番目ノ室ニ居リ
マシタ。馬糞ヤ糞ヤ腐敗シタモノト一箱クタニ
サレタノデス。又水ヘ起テ計ツテ與ヘラレマシ
タ。食物ヘ日ニ二度與ヘラレル筈デシタガ、日
ニ一度シカナイコトガヨクアリマシタ。食事ヘ
通常卓上起ニ三杯分ノ熱イ薄イ汁ト、同事ノ飯
ガ日ニ二度デアリマシタ。兵士ノ多クノ者ガ、
今迄該ツタ色々ナ事ノタメニ慣リ續ツタ衰弱ヤ
赤痢ヤ、サモナケレバマラリアノタメニ死亡シ
マシタ。死亡者ハ平均日ニ二十五人デ主トシテ
飢餓、赤痢、傳染病ガ因デシタ。我々ハ嚙ラ食
ベ、或者ハ馬糞ト一箱ニ床ノ上ニ落テテイタ穀
粒スラモツマミ上ゲル程飢ヘテキマシタ。我々
ハ空腹デ氣モ狂ヘンベカリデシタ。一月二日ト
三日ノ二回、我々ノ船ハ魚雷攻撃ヲ受ケマシタ
船ノ舵ト推進機ガ損傷ヲ蒙リマシタガ、死傷者
ハアリマセンデシタ。我々ハコノ黒匹運送船ニ
計十三ロベカリ居リマシタ。一月九日、臺灣高
雄港デ海軍ノ急降下爆撃機ニ攻撃サレマシタ。
因、コノ状態ヲ改善スル爲ニ何カ勞力ガナサレマシ
タカ。

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答、オルセン中佐ガ自分ノ身ノ安全ヲ賭シテ幾多ノ
努力ヲサレマシタ。村田中尉ト和田氏ハ何等ノ
刀ヲシヨウトセズ又我々ノ言フコトヲ確カウト
モシマセンデシタ。

問、一月九ロニハドンナ事ガ起リマシタカ。

答、我々ノ船ハ吃水線ニ沾ツテ横濱ノ碼頭ヲ喰ヒマ
シタ。ソノ内ノ三隻ハ、朝食ヲ待ツテ、イクツ
カノ風ヲ作ツテ並ンデキタ六百人カ七百人バカ
リノ兵士ガキタ前部船ヲ燬シマシタ。ソノ
時ニ我々ハ二十人ニ縮シテ兵隊田ノ茶園ニ一
杯ノ茶ヲモラヒマシタ。ソノ三隻ノ碼頭ハ、前
部船ヲ居所トシテイタ七百人ノ兵士ノ内五百
人ヲ殺害シ後部船ニキタ約二百人ノ者ヲ傷ツ
ケマシタ。我々ハ飢餓ニ身曝シヤ極寒ノタメニ、
スツカリ健康ヲ損ネテキマシタノデ、皆衰弱シ
タ状態デアリマシタ。兩船倉ハ巨根ガナク我々
ハ毛布ヲ持ツテキマセンデシタ。大部分ノ者ハ
衣服モ持ツテキマセンデシタ。我々ハ全然醫療
ヲ受ケラレマセンデシタ。ソシテ臺灣ニ近ツイ
タ頃ハ食物ヲ與ヘラレルノハ日ニ一度デ、水ハ
アリマセンデシタ。ソレデ我々ハ船倉へ吹込

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大雪ヲロニ入レヤウト思ツテ、馬糞ダラケノ床
ヲ引張キ廻シマシタ。我々が帰郷サレタ當時、
飢餓ト窮乏ノタメニ日ニ約四十人ノ者が死ンデ
キマシタ。

問、帰郷サレタ後デ何カ起リマシタカ。

答、生還ツタ我々へ、内海航路ノ小サナ汽船ニ移サ
レ、日本へ送ラレマシタ。死亡率ハ高カッタノ
デスガ私ニハソレガドレ位ダツタカ見當ガツキ
マセン。大体一月二十八日カ二十九日ニ我々へ
九州本島ノ門司ニ着キマシタ。多クノ者ハ必長
ナ水ヲ得ル爲ニ麻布襪ノ雪ヲ極キ落サウトシテ
看護兵ニ擲ラレマシタ。此處ノ状態モ又ワルカ
ツタ。最初乗込ンダ千六百八十七人ノ中約二百
二十五人が門司デ下船シソノ一行ノ中百五人ハ
傷病兵デ病院ニ運レテ行カレマシタ。コノ時荷
田中尉ト和田氏ハ一行カラ離レマシタ。

問、ソレカラ何が起リマシタカ。

答、コノ病院ハガラントシタ小舎デシタ。患者ハ居
ラズ我々ハ板敷ノ上ニ寝ナケレバナリマセンデシ
タ。我々ハ数日間何等ノ醫藥モ受ケラレズ少量ノ

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食物ヲ貰ツタダケデシタ。我々ヘ一日二度食物
ヲ貰ヒマシタガソレヘ主ニ薄爾デシタ。我々ヘ
二月二十日迄コノニキマシタ。コノ時ノ死亡率
ハ非常ニ高ク毎日約十人乃至十七人ノ死人ヲ出
シ二月二十日ニハ百五人ノ中コソツタノヘ二十七
人デシタ。

陸軍航空隊中尉

ヘロルド・ジヨン・フイツトカム (署名)

／
END
／

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